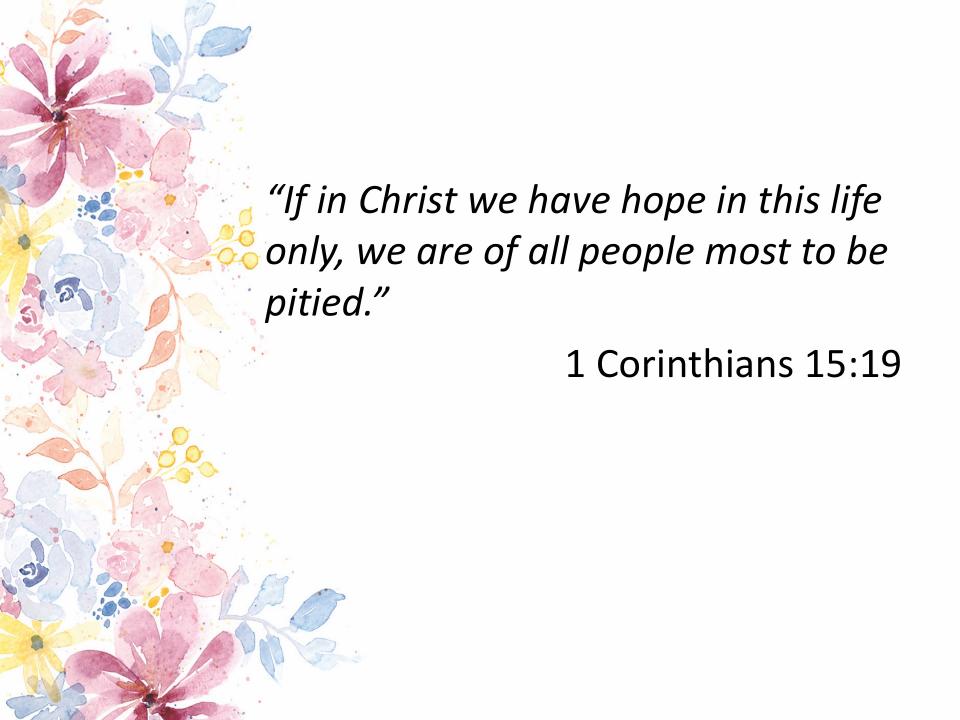


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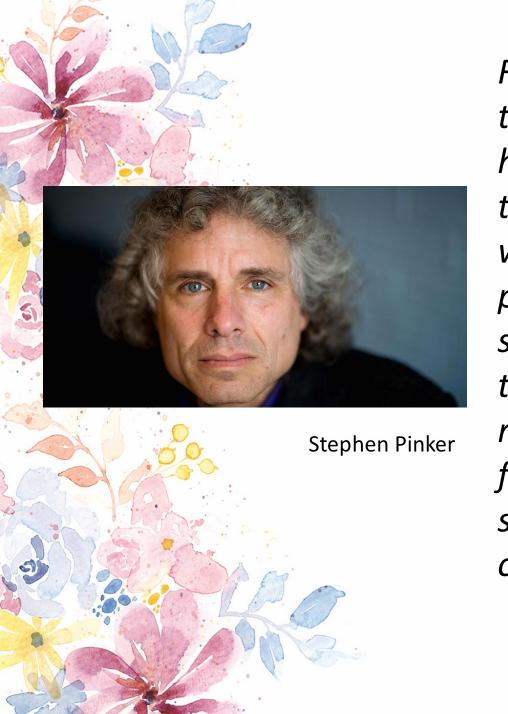




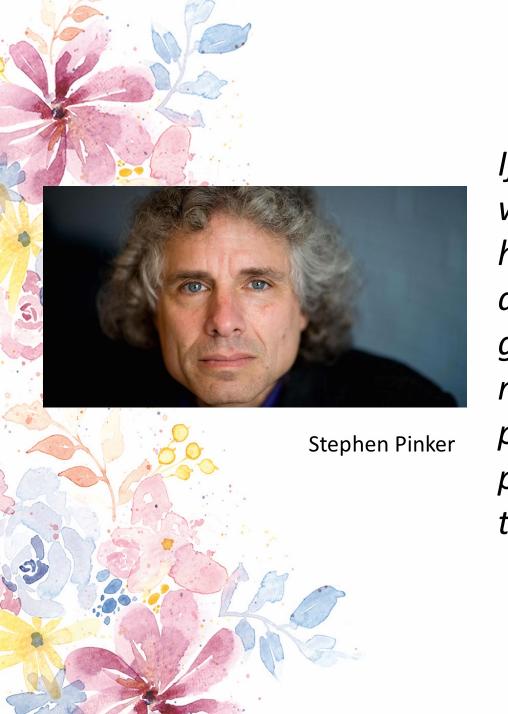




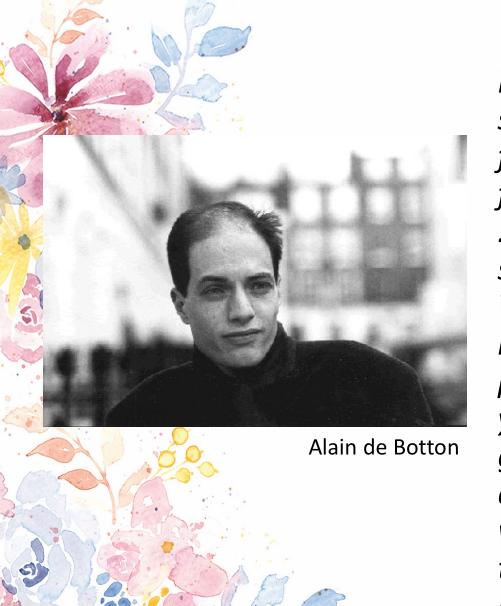
"The icon Fred Rogers not only was showing my brown skin in the tub with his white skin as two friends, but as I was getting out of that tub, he was helping me dry my feet."



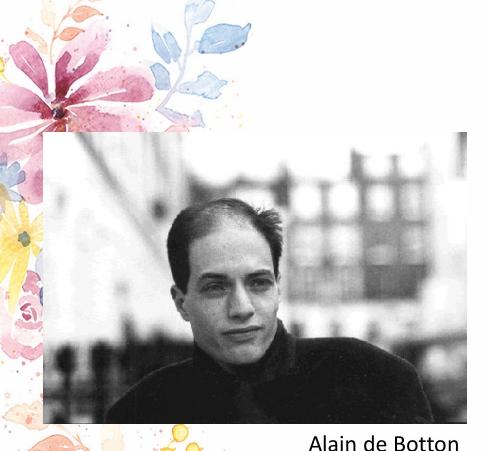
Few sophisticated people today profess a belief in heaven and hell, the literal truth of the Bible, or a God who flouts the laws of physics. . . . To take something on faith means to believe it without good reason, so by definition a faith in the existence of supernatural entities clashes with reason. . . .



If we want to make the world a better place we have to figure out how to do it ourselves. . . . If you're going to count on God to make the world a better place, then you're probably going to make the world a worse place.

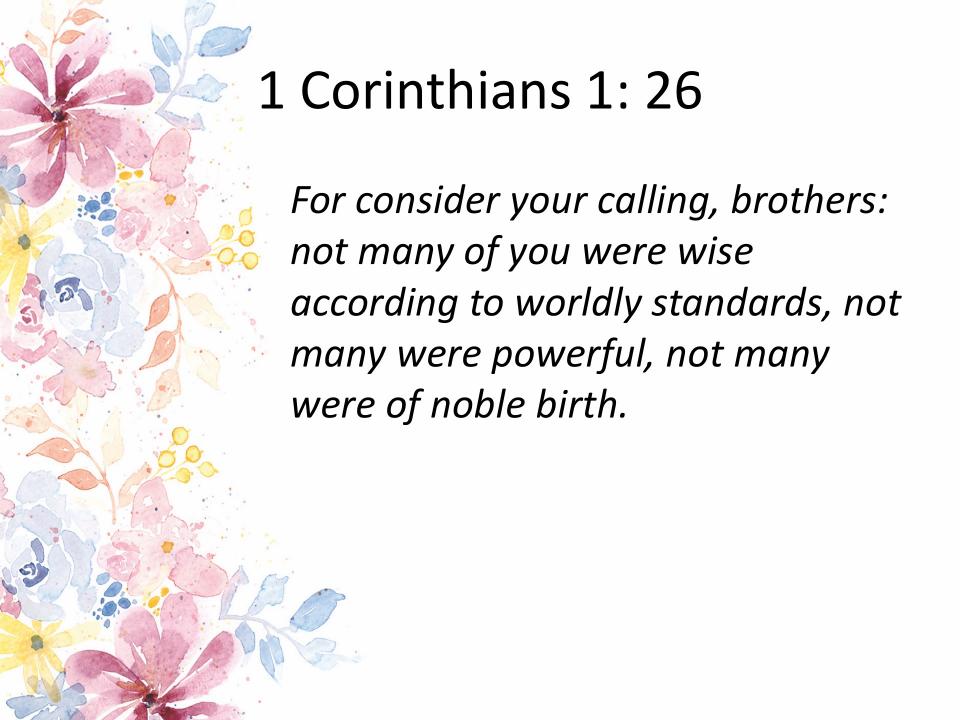


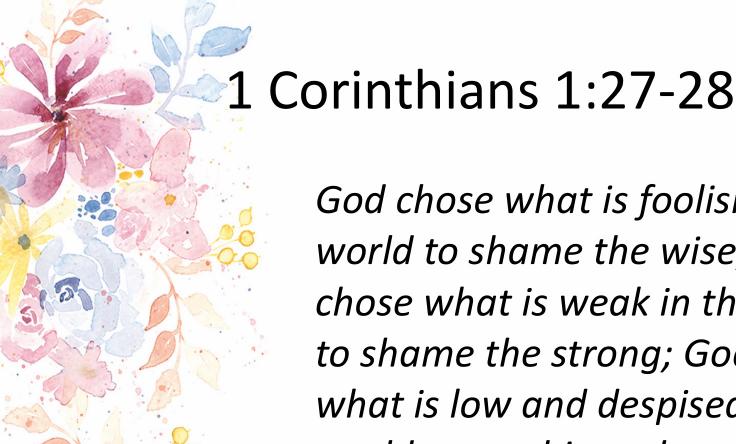
I love the concept of original sin, the idea that we're all fundamentally broken and fundamentally incomplete... . .because it seems to be such a useful starting point. You know, if you imagine a relationship in which two people think they're great you know, perfect—that's going to lead to intolerance and terrible disappointment when they realize that they're not great, they're not perfect.





Whereas imagine a relationship that begins under the idea that two people are quite broken and therefore they need forgiveness from the other and they need to apply charity to the other and they need to forgive the other, and so that seems a much better starting point.





God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that *are...* 







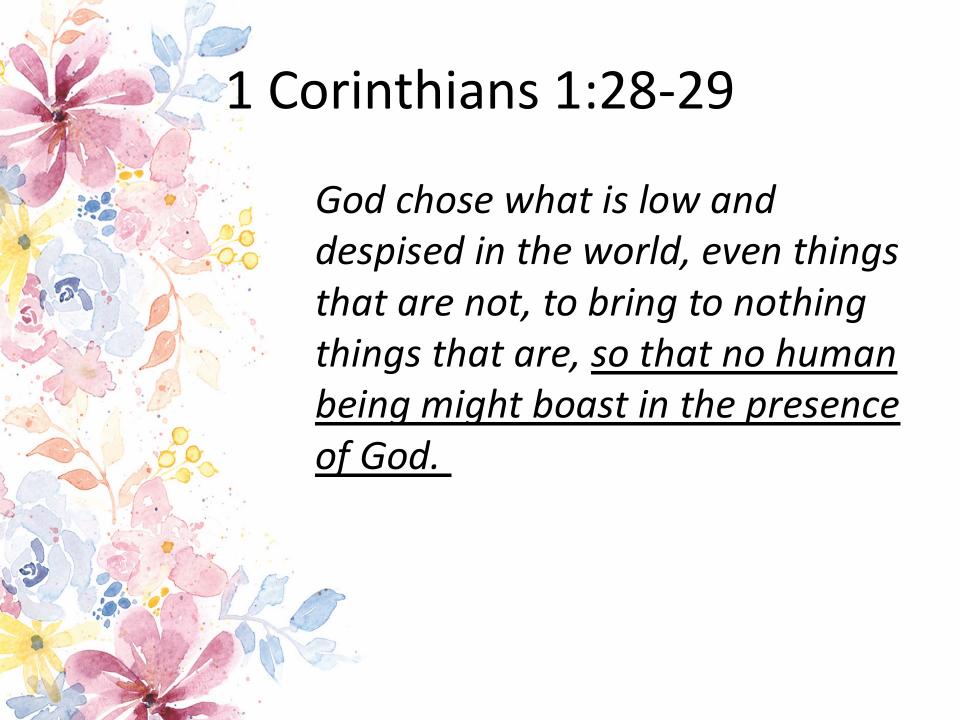
They have their faith because what they believe in doesn't judge them. Who am I to tell them that what they believe is irrational? . . . I cannot tell them that there is nothing beyond this physical life. It would be cruel and pointless.



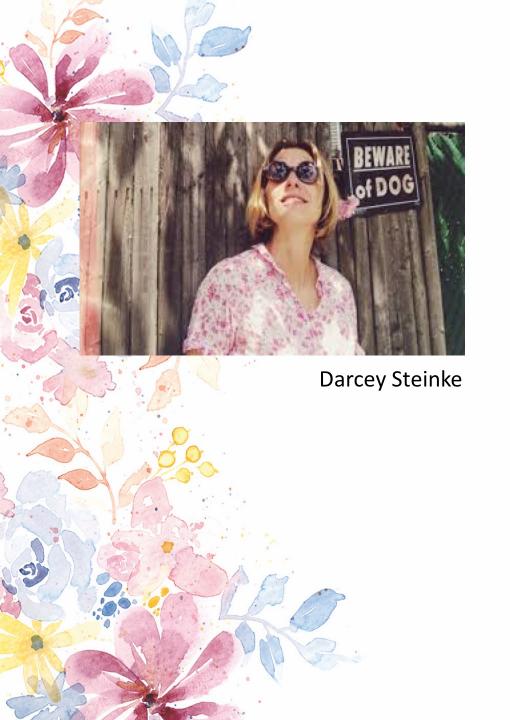
In these last three years, out from behind my computers, I have been reminded that life is not rational and that everyone makes mistakes. Or, in Biblical terms, we are all sinners. We are all sinners. On the streets the addicts, with their daily battles and proximity to death, have come to understand this viscerally.

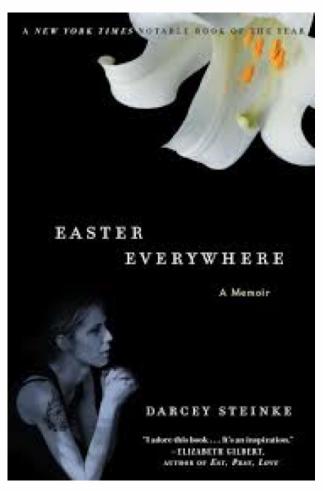


Many successful people don't. Their sense of entitlement and emotional distance has numbed their understanding of our fallibility. Soon I saw my atheism for what it is: an intellectual belief most accessible to those who have done well.



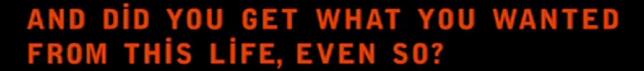








One has only the choice between God and idolatry. If one denies God ... one is worshiping some things of this world in the belief that one sees them only as such, but in fact, though unknown to oneself imagining the attributes of Divinity in them.

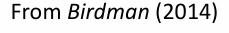


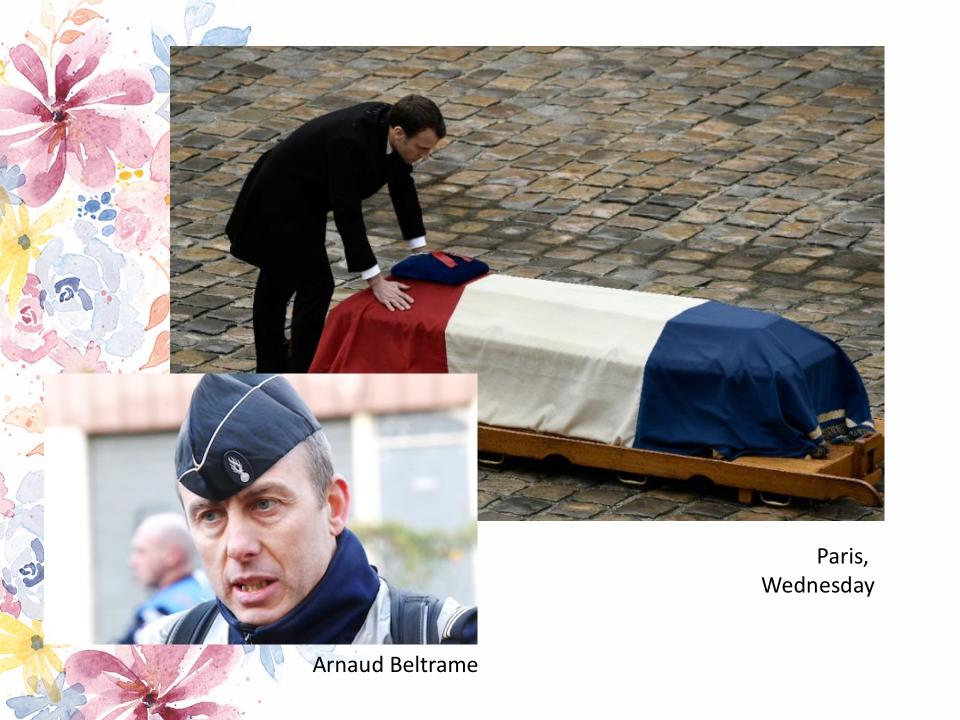
i Dib.

AND WHAT DID YOU WANT?

TO CALL MYSELF BELOVED, TO FEEL MYSELF BELOVED ON THE EARTH.

(RAYMOND CARVER, LATE FRAGMENT)









Judge Lou Olivera

